

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EB-08 NSC-05 FTC-01 LOC-01
L-03 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 /106 W
-----073392 111245Z/11

R 101440Z JUL 78
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1809

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: WIPO
SUBJECT: WIPO GROUP OF EXPERTS ON INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY
ASPECTS OF CONSUMER PROTECTION, JULY 3-5, 1978

WHITE HOUSE PASS TO CAVAGNERO, FTC PASS TO GRIMES

1. SUBJECT MEETING WAS HELD AS SCHEDULED. PROF GLENN WESTON OF GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY WAS ELECTED CHAIRMAN. DEVELOPING COUNTRIES REPRESENTED INCLUDED ARGENTINA, MEXICO, TUNISIA AND ZAMBIA. DEVELOPED COUNTRIES REPRESENTED INCLUDED CANADA, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND US. REPRESENTATIVES OF ALGERIA AND PHILIPPINES WERE ASKED BUT FAILED TO ATTEND. NO SOCIALIST COUNTRIES WERE REPRESENTED, ALTHOUGH WIPO SECRETARIAT HAD ASKED FOR REPRESENTATIVES. IOC AND UN CENTRE ON TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS WERE REPRESENTED AS OBSERVERS. EXPERTS ALL APPEARED IN INDIVIDUAL CAPACITIES.

2. THE AGENDA CONSISTED OF DISCUSSING A LIST OF POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR FUTURE STUDY PREPARED BY THE WIPO SECRETARIAT. MANY OF THE TOPICS HAD NO PARTICULAR RELATION TO INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY. IN PARTICULAR, SECRETARIAT HAS INTERPRETED ARTICLE 10 BIS OF THE PARIS CONVENTION AS GIVING WIPO A

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BROAD MANDATE AGAINST UNFAIR COMPETITION, POSSIBLY INCLUDING ALL MISLEADING REPRESENTATIONS IN ADVERTISING OR LABELLING OF PRODUCTS. OTHER TOPICS OF CONTROVERSY INCLUDED THE EXTENT TO WHICH QUALITY STANDARDS SHOULD BE SET AND ENFORCED INTERNATIONALLY AND POSSIBLE METHODS OF PREVENTING OR REDRESSING CONSUMER INJURY CAUSED BY ABUSE OR MISUSE OF INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY.

3. WIPO SECRETARIAT OBTAINED CONSENSUS APPROVAL, OVER OBJECTIONS OF SOME DELEGATES, INCLUDING U.S., OF A DRAFT REPORT CALLING FOR FURTHER WIPO SECRETARIAT STUDY OF A BROAD RANGE OF TOPICS IN THE CONSUMER PROTECTION FIELD, USING CONSULTANTS TO THE EXTENT THAT U.S. MAY WISH TO RESTRAIN FURTHER GROWTH OF WIPO BUDGET IN THIS AREA. U.S. REP TO GOVERNING BODY MEETING IN FALL 1978 SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF ISSUANCE OF THIS REPORT. IF FURTHER WORK IS APPROVED, THE NEXT STEP SHOULD BE HOLDING ANOTHER EXPERT GROUP MEETING TO CONSIDER THE STUDY BY THE WIPO SECRETARIAT.

4. OVERALL, DEVELOPING COUNTRY DELEGATES TENDED TO BE EITHER FROM CONSUMER PROTECTION AGENCIES OR DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS. THEY HAD NO PARTICULAR EXPERTISE IN INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY. THEY WERE CONCERNED WITH MEANS TO PROTECT CONSUMERS FROM ABUSES. DEVELOPED COUNTRY DELEGATES TENDED TO BE EXPERTS IN INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY, WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT EXPERTISE IN CONSUMER PROTECTION, EXCEPT U.S. DEL (FISCHBACH). THEY TENDED TO BE CONCERNED WITH PROTECTION OF HOLDERS OF INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY RIGHTS. DISCUSSIONS TENDED TO POLARIZE BETWEEN POSITION OF U.S. PRIVATE SECTOR REP (PATTISHALL), WHO INSISTED THAT THERE WAS NO CONSUMER PROTECTION INTEREST IN INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY EXCEPT POSSIBLY IN PREVENTING PASSING OFF OF GOODS UNDER MISAPPROPRIATED TRADE-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MARKS, AND NO REASON FOR ANY WIPO STUDY OR ACTIVITY IN CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND ARGENTINE REP (FERRER) AND TUNISIAN REP (ZRIBI) WHO PRESSED FOR WIPO ACTION IN ALL ASPECTS OF CONSUMER PROTECTION.

5. USDEL SUGGESTS THAT, WHILE ANY DUPLICATIONS OF EFFORT WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES OR EXPANSIONS OF WIPO BUDGET OR MANDATE SHOULD BE AVOIDED, WIPO IS PROBABLY THE BEST PLACE IN THE UN FRAMEWORK TO STUDY THOSE ASPECTS OF INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY WHICH ARE RELEVANT TO CONSUMER PROTECTION, IF THEY ARE TO BE STUDIED AT ALL. USG SHOULD DECIDE WHETHER FURTHER STUDY IS APPROPRIATE AND INSTRUCT ITS DELEGATES TO WIPO GOVERNING BODY ACCORDINGLY, BEING CAREFUL TO AVOID UNINTENTIONALLY GIVING WIPO AN UNLIMITED MANDATE TO WORK IN THE FIELD OF PRODUCT ADVERTISING. VANDEN HEUVEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CULTURAL PROPERTY, INDUSTRY, MEETINGS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GENEVA10399
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780283-0478
Format: TEL
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780780/aaaacppt.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 458ae378-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION COME
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2072906
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WIPO GROUP OF EXPERTS ON INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY ASPECTS OF CONSUMER PROTECTION, JULY 3-5, 1978 WHITE HOUSE PASS TO CAVAGNERO, FTC PASS TO GRIMES
TAGS: SCUL, PORG, WIPO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/458ae378-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014